

THE GATE TO THE  
GOSPEL

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ELMER ELLSWORTH HELMS



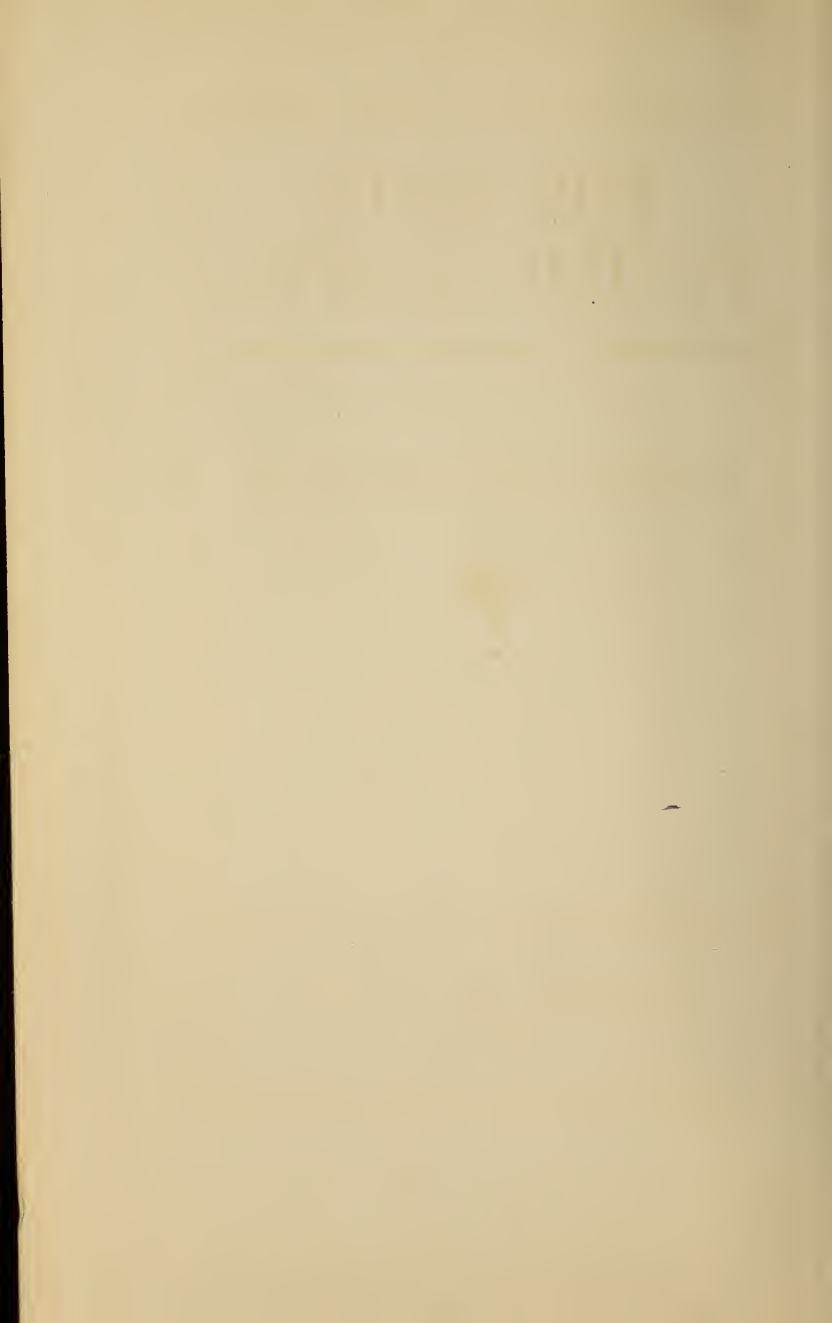
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# THE GATE TO THE GOSPEL

BY  
ELMER ELLSWORTH HELMS



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John 3:16.

**G**od so loved the world, that He gave His  
**O**nly begotten  
**S**on, that whosoever believeth in Him should not  
**P**erish, but have  
**E**verlasting  
**L**ife."





## Introduction

I am glad to lift the latch of "The Gate to the Gospel." Luther said, "John 3:16 is the Gospel in a nutshell." The founder of Methodism said John 3:16 "is the Gospel in twenty-five words." If any reader has doubted it he will doubt it no more after reading these ten chapters on that supreme verse.

In opening his memorable speech in reply to Haynes of South Carolina, January 26, 1830, Daniel Webster said, "When the mariner has been tossed for many days in thick weather and on an unknown sea, he naturally avails himself of the first pause in the storm, the earliest glance of the sun, to take his latitude and ascertain how far the elements have driven him from his true course."

We live in the days of the critic. Everything is figurative now—even the birth and death and resurrection of our Lord—and, of course, the miracles: Verily, the critics "have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him." In the midst of the present-day fog and confusion and storm, this volume points to the Sun of Righteousness, and opens

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## Introduction

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for us again "The Gate of the Gospel"—the Gospel of John and Paul and Luther and Wesley and Simpson. And we discover, alas! how far foggy theological speculation has driven us from the true course.

Eight years of my Episcopal life were spent at Buffalo, N. Y. Dr. Helms was a pastor in that beautiful city during those years, as he had been for some years before. I frequently attended his church. He was—and is—one of the most virile preachers of our day, a preacher of men to men. The church was always crowded on Sunday nights with men. These ten chapters give a hint as to the secret of his magnetic and successful ministry.

Preachers and people will read this book with unmeasured profit, and reading, will be better and stronger. For here is found the real Gospel, the whole Gospel, without question or quibble, the Gospel of the very Son of God. Many a preacher could profitably read these chapters to his people, and among many of our people there would begin a real revival of real religion. For that is the passion of these pages. May God give them wings to waft them into thousands of homes and hearts!

JOSEPH F. BERRY.

*Episcopal Residence, Philadelphia, Pa.*

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“GOD”

“Lord of all being! throned afar,  
Thy glory flames from sun and star,  
Center and soul of every sphere,  
Yet to each loving heart how near!

“Sun of our life, Thy quickening ray  
Sheds on our path the glow of day;  
Star of our hope, Thy softened light  
Cheers the long watches of the night.

“Our midnight is Thy smile withdrawn,  
Our noontide is Thy gracious dawn;  
Our rainbow arch Thy mercy’s sign;  
All, save the clouds of sin, are Thine!

“Lord of all life, below, above,  
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,  
Before Thy ever-blazing throne  
We ask no luster of our own.

“Grant us Thy truth to make us free,  
And kindling hearts that burn for Thee,  
Till all Thy living altars claim  
One holy light, one heavenly flame.”

## “GOD”

IT is generally agreed that there have been seventeen great battles. We are now in the eighteenth, the battle of creeds—for and against. If a man wants to receive the plaudits of the crowd, all he needs to do is to pull out his little hatchet and go hacking at the great pyramid of creeds, and, after making a few chips fly, the populace cry, “Verily, the gods have come down among us.” Soda water was always popular, and it is remarkable how people run after bubbles, thinking they be diamonds. During the great laymen’s National Missionary Conference a few years ago, while six thousand men were crowding into the great auditorium to discuss the carrying of the gospel to the last man, a bill-poster was tacking up placards at the entrance to the hall, announcing that a certain free-thinker would speak there the following Sunday afternoon on “The Crumbling Creeds of Christianity.” By actual count, just two hundred and ten people came to hear. The

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creeds of Christianity are not crumbling. Then, what is all this we hear? To condense steam into water is not to annihilate; to pour a precious liquid from a pitcher that is cracked into one that is whole, is not to pour it on to the ground. Really thoughtful men are not crying, "Down with creeds," though some of them may be asking for a change from steam that scalds to water that satisfies, a change of form. Not "no creed," but a new pitcher for the elixir of life.

Creed—what is creed? Credo, I believe. A man's creed is what he believes. There is no use discussing whether a man can live without a creed, for no man has ever lived without one. Every man has a creed. Even the poor atheist, who declares that of all men he is creedless, has the shallowest and smallest of creeds. Atheist—"a-theos"—"no God"—"I believe there is no God." God says, "He is a fool who says there is no God." It takes a fool to say it. That's the creed of the atheist. A man's creed is simply what he believes—sometimes written, oftener not.

The agnostic advertises his creed in the very word which he flings on his banner—"agnostic"



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## God

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—"do n't know." "Agnostic, is there a God?"  
"Do n't know, doubt it." "Has man a soul?"  
"Do n't know, doubt it." "If he has a soul, is  
it immortal?" "Do n't know, doubt it." "Ag-  
nosticism"—do you know anything? Echo an-  
swers, "Do n't know, doubt it."

It is not only impossible for a man to live without a creed, but creeds are all important. A man's creed is what a man believes. "As a man believeth, so is he." Creed makes character. What a man believes molds him, makes him; alas! too often mars him. A creed is simply a condensed statement of what one believes.

In Paris there is a statue of a knight, heavy armored, helmet on his head, a great shield leaning against him, a broadsword hanging by his side. Look on his face and you'll never forget it. In his outstretched hands he is holding a scroll, on which is one word, "Credo"—I believe. 'T was that that put that fire in his eye, that energy in his face, that swelled his body until it looked able to take a kingdom. No soldier is worthy to be called a soldier until he can cry, "I believe in my cause, my country,

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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myself." Conduct reveals creed; creed determines conduct; creed reveals character; creed is simply what a man believes. A Christian creed is simply taking the great teachings of the Bible and arranging them. So a Scriptural creed is simply a condensed Bible. If there is anything in your creed not in the Bible, then it is n't Christian.

Do you want the best creed? That will meet your every need? That will never need revising? That is all complete, comprehensive, concise, condensed? That swallows up the Book from Genesis to Revelation? That crowds the Bible into one sentence, twenty-five words? Here it is, John 3:16. Have you ever studied it? Behold in it God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, the Holy Spirit, the fact of sin, man's lost condition, the plan of salvation, the atonement, Calvary, the great love of God, faith the connecting link between the human and divine, immortality, two eternal destinies—eternal life, eternal death. There are ten great fundamentals of the Christian religion; they are all in this verse. If you want a creed that you need and upon which you can stand, and having

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## *God*

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done all, stand, when the worlds go crash, here it is:

It begins, "For God," and there you stop, for that staggers you. It is easier far to climb Mount Everest than that. Before you even begin the ascent you grow dizzy and faint. "God." Who ever climbed to the height of that word? Who ever got to the top of the first letter? Daniel Webster says, "There has never been but one thought that staggered me—'God.'" "In the beginning"—motion? matter? mind? man?—Nay—"God"—the sublimest word ever penned. "God is," the greatest sentence ever spoken. "God." Over that word more volumes have been written, more discussions waged, more theological, intellectual, scientific battles fought than over all other words. "God." Herbert Spencer spelled that word, "Unknowable;" Goethe, "Unknown;" George Eliot, "Inconceivable;" Darwin, "Unthinkable;" Frederick Harrison, "the All-oneness." And then they have been disappointed that the world has n't rushed to the shadow of their definitions. These are no better than algebraic formulas. You can not pray to an algebraic formula; you can not

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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worship a geometrical equation; you can not say, "X, Y, Z, help me, love me, make me one with thee."

A materialistic scientist exclaims, "Did any one ever see God?" and then triumphantly retorts, "No; then there is no God." Did any one ever see love? Then there is no love. Did any one ever see electricity? Then there is no electricity. Did any one ever see gravity, life, wind, sunlight? Is love knowable? Ask any mother. Is electricity knowable? By its phenomena, yes. Is life knowable? By its manifestations, yes. Is sunlight knowable? By its throb through the universe, yes. Is gravity knowable? Some slippery morning you venture out, and suddenly one foot is traveling north and the other south. What does that lump on the back of your head say? That gravity is knowable.

Is God knowable? Yes and no. Honey is sweet; that is easy for the dullest to grasp; anybody can understand honey. But the ratio of the circumference of a circle to the diameter is expressed by, "Pi equals 3.14,168." That is n't so easy to grasp; that's higher up the scale.

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## God

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Can the worm at your feet understand you, measure your ways, comprehend your thoughts? And yet the distance between that worm and you is but a span, compared to the infinite distance between you and God. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, My thoughts than your thoughts." I once saw a fly crawling on a globe, a globe sixty feet around. How much did that fly know of that globe? Yet it crawled painfully, slowly on, feeling if haply it might find out the what of the globe. When the Greeks, and Hindus, and Norsemen, and North American Indians, and South Sea Islanders called God, "Zeus," "Jupiter," "The Great Spirit," "Woden," they were feeling after if haply they might find God. Athens, through her thirty thousand gods; Brahmanism, through her three hundred and thirty million gods; Paganism, through her millions and millions of gods, were all groping through their darkness after God.

Why was a revelation given to us from God, of God? Humanity did n't need a revelation to tell it that God is omnipotent. He that hath

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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eyes can see that in the flung worlds, the towering Mt. Blanc; hear that in the crashing thunder, the wave-torn Atlantic, the sweeping cyclone. Lo! the poor Indian, even "his untutored mind sees God in clouds and hears Him in the wind." God's omnipotence is written in letters of fire, so that he who runs may read. Man did not need a revelation to tell him of God's omniscience, for everything from dewdrop to sky dome, from spider's web to sunbeam, from grass blade to great globe, declares the wisdom of God. "The heavens declare the wisdom of God."

Man does not need a revelation to tell him of God's omnipresence, for "God is here, God is there, God is everywhere; go where you will, you meet Him." "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the earth, if I ascend up into Heaven, if I make my bed in hell, behold, God is there." By night there whispers a small voice, "Be still and know that I am God."

We do not need a revelation to teach us the greatness of God. The Scriptures say that God is great, but for always man has felt that there

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was something greater than the stars, higher than the mountains, deeper than the seas, mightier than the universe. The Greeks erected an altar to this something and labeled it, "To the Unknown God." And the Pagan Athenian poet wrote, "In Him we live and move and have our being." He who spake and "dust stood erect in conscious man," He who "guides the planets in their course," "He who hung the worlds on nothing, He who hath made us and not we ourselves, He is great."

Nor yet do we need a revelation to tell us that God is just, for through every barred gate of every prison door we read, "The way of the transgressor is hard." "He can not look upon sin with any degree of allowance."

Nations long had their chiseled Joves, representing God's might; their Minervas, representing God's wisdom; Neptune, the god of the sea; Venus, the god of base appetites; Ceres, the god of corn; Bacchus, the god of the cup; but nowhere in high sky or deep sea or broad continent or wide wilderness did they ever read, "God is love." It took a revelation, a John 3:16 to tell that. "God is love."

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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Has it ever come to your notice that while the Bible tells much about God, it never defines Him but once. When you read, "God is good, just, great, unchangeable, omnipotent," these all tell about God; none of them define Him. These are all adjectives. An adjective can not define a noun. No adjective is large enough to balance a noun. A noun on one side of the equation demands a noun on the other. An adjective tells something about, but never defines a noun. There is only one noun used of God in all the Bible.

Our Scotch fathers gave us the definition of God that is in our catechisms, "God is spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." That definition is good theology, but very poor religion. It satisfies the head, but has nothing in it for the heart. The one word that you would expect to find in this definition you do n't find. That definition is good exercise for the mind, but when one's heart is broken and bleeding, he will find that definition a marble pillow on which to rest. The disciple "whom Jesus loved," who pillowed his head in Jesus'



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## *God*

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heart that last night, gives us the only definition of God. Passing strange that our Scotch fathers, in seeking a definition, should pass him by who said, "God is love." The great definition is, "God is love." The great fact is the love of God.

When we study the attributes of God that we have been naming, after all, they are only different ways of spelling love. His omnipotence is but the arm of His love. His omniscience is but the medium through which He contemplates the object of His love. His wisdom is but the scheme of His love. The offers of the gospel are but the invitations of His love. The threatenings of law are but warnings of His love. They are the hoarse voice of His love saying, "Man, do thyself no harm." They are but a fence of love thrown around the pit of destruction to prevent rash man from rushing to his ruin. His tears are but the dew-drops of His love. His justice is love dealing righteously. This earth is but the theater for the display of His love. What is Heaven but the Alps of His love, from whose summits His blessings flow down in a thousand streams to

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water and refresh the world? No marvel that the disciple who felt the beat of that great heart shouted, "God is love!"

If it had not been for God's love, the world long since would have been wiped out. Seeing the butcheries and blasphemies and holocausts and hells and wrongs and wretchedness, if justice had spoken, it would have said, "The world deserves annihilation; let me annihilate it." Truth, seeing the falsehoods and deceptions, would have cried, "Away with it!" Omniscience, if it had spoken, would have said, "I have looked into the world's deepest darkness; there is not one that doeth good; wipe it out." But Love pleads, "Spare it a little time yet; wait, wait, I'll go down." And down, down He came, crying, "Let me at this pollution." Love pours itself out unto death to wash away the world's sin, to cleanse the world's wickedness, and to make possible the world's reclamation.

"God is love." The three greatest words ever written. Can you grasp them? "God is love." When God is pictured as a good Shepherd going out into the darkness and storm and

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## God

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tearing hands and feet and heart, up the rough mountain height after the lost sheep, it is simply a poor way of trying to say, "God is love." When we picture the Father weeping over the prodigal, and putting around him the best robe, and pushing on his finger the golden ring, and covering him with His kisses and caresses, it is only another way of saying, "God is love." When God is represented as the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, when all other friends fail us, it's simply, "God is love." When we read, "When thy father and mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up," it is but an attempt to give us a glimpse of the immeasurable, "God is love."

In front of a church in one of our cities there is a transparency that flashes out, now in red, now in white, now in blue, changing colors every fifteen seconds—"God is love." And the records of that Church reveal that at least thirty-seven men have been led by that ever-changing, ever-flaming, "God is love," to know the love of God that passeth knowledge.

Jupiter, the god of the Romans; Zeus, the god of the Greeks; Osiris, the god of the Egyp-

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tians, are remembered only in pictured legend and decayed temples. All the gods of the heathen are fast passing away. God only is, for God is love, and love is eternal. Exclaims the psalmist, "Among the gods there is none like unto Thee; Thou art God alone." The backslidden Baal worshipers of Mt. Carmel cried, "The Lord, He is God." The Scripture which we read, "Be still and know that I am God," is really, "Be still and know God." Do you know Him? Have you ever sat down and made His personal acquaintance? Do you know Him as Father? He is not your father unless you are His son, and we become sons only through birth. You must be born from above. Is He your Friend, your Savior, your Companion, your Helper? That grand man, Governor Mount, of Indiana, stepped from the executive chair across the street in Indianapolis over into a hotel and fell dead. President Harrison, speaking at his funeral, said, "He took God into account in his public and private life." Do you? In this Book we read of certain ones, "God was not in all their thoughts," and the climax of sins is put down as "they that

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## God

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forget God." Do you know God? You must make His acquaintance here, or you will never see His face there, but only hear His voice, "Depart from Me; I never knew you." Dr. Dale says, "Nobody is afraid of God now." Perhaps not now, but then, there, when you stand in His mighty presence to give account.

Pharnaces, while still a rebel, sent a diadem to Cæsar. Cæsar declined it and sent it back with, "Your obedience first, then your gifts." "To obey is better than sacrifice." Do you give God your things but keep back yourself? God demands, has a right to demand, your heart, your life, your love—you. Do you call Him Master, and obey Him not; Lord, and serve Him not? Do you know God?

In the early days of Ohio, while it was still an unbroken forest, a young husband and his wife went into the dense woods and built them a little home. They were alone, save only God and the babe—yes, the babe. And the husband struggled to make that wilderness blossom as a rose. One day, when the babe was two and a half years old, hearing its father's ax sounding in the far-off wood, it toddled out among the

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trees to find the father, but alas! it followed the echo rather than the ax, and wandered far, and some roving Indians going through, picked it up and took it with them to the far Northwest. That father and mother hunted for days. They tried to live in that little cabin, but could not stand it. There was the cradle and the crude playthings and the sand pile. They left it all and went into far Wisconsin. Fourteen years with heavy hearts, and then one day there came news to them that some Indians at the trading post had with them a girl that looked not like an Indian girl, and the father went like a wild man to see that girl. Their little one had a mole upon her right shoulder. This girl had, and he told her that she was his girl, and this white Indian girl laughed in his face; and then he went and got the mother, and she, convinced, fell on the ground and hugged the girl's feet. And that girl, her girl, spat upon her mother. The mother sank to the ground, torn with sorrow unto death. At last, semi-beside herself, thinking of her babe, she broke out in the cradle songs she used to sing over that little thing: "Rock-a-bye Baby," "Papa's Pet," "Home,

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## *God*

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Sweet Home." The girl raised her eyes as in a dream, looked up, gazed afar, walked as in a trance, and threw herself into her mother's arms. She had heard the voice of long ago calling her. O, the voices of long ago, how they call! The voice of thy mother's God, the voice of thy father's God. The voice that called thee in childhood unheeded, "Son, daughter, give Me thy heart." Jesus is tenderly calling to-day, calling from afar. Hear His voice. Harden not your hearts. Do you know God? Now is your day. This is your time to know God.





“SO LOVED”

“I can not always trace the way  
Where Thou, Almighty One, dost move,  
But I can always, always say,  
That God is love.

“When Fear her chilling mantle throws  
O'er earth, my soul to Heaven above,  
As to her native home, upsprings,  
For God is love.

“When mystery clouds my darkened path,  
I'll check my dread, my doubt reprove;  
In this my soul sweet comfort hath,  
That God is love.

“Yes, God is love;—a thought like this  
Can every gloomy thought remove,  
And turn all tears, all woes, to bliss,  
For God is love.”

## “SO LOVED”

**D**R. CHAMBERLAIN, the veteran missionary of India, one day came into a strange heathen village, and the natives made a rush for him with their spears to kill him. He raised his hand, they paused a moment, and he repeated in their tongue “John 3:16,” and told them the story of God’s love that sent Jesus Christ to them, and then, closing his eyes, he sang, “Jesus, Lover of my soul,” and when he had done every spear was down. He was not the first nor yet the last to discover that there is all power in these mighty words, “God so loved.” One day, in the Santa Fe railroad shops in Topeka, Kansas, during the noon hour, an infidel workman came across a fellow-workman reading his Bible, and the infidel said, “What! reading that? You do n’t surely believe it?” “Well, I have struck a verse just now I hardly know whether to believe or not.” “Aha!” retorted the infidel in glee, “I thought so; what is it?” “John 3:16—it seems too good to believe.”

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A street waif in New York saw over the door of a mission these words, and came in to ask what they meant. He was caught by the very spell of them. He became a very faithful attendant at the mission. They called him "John 3:16." One day he was struck down on the streets by a team, badly cut and torn, and carried to a hospital. When they inquired his name he said, "John 3:16." One night he was very low, and he insisted that the nurse bring him a slip of paper, and he printed on it, "John 3:16," and asked her to pin it to his pillow for him, "For," said he, "I am afraid when God comes through He may not be able to find me if I do n't have my name pinned on." The next morning when the nurse came through he was very still and cold, and "John 3:16" fluttered white against his pillow. God had found him. He knoweth His own sheep by name.

Notice the great words of this verse. No other verse in the world has so many great words: "God," "loved," "world," "gave up," "Son," "whosoever," "believeth," "perish," "everlasting life." "God so loved—loved." The

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## *So Loved*

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longer I live the less I am surprised that Paul said, "The greatest of these is love," for that word scales the heights, delves the deeps—sweetest word of mortal tongue. Love is the only thing that lasts. Love is the heart of the universe; it's the soul of God. God would cease to live if He ceased to love. Even human love is divine. Before one of the large stores a woman saw a great sight. There slept, side by side in a baby buggy, a little soft-cheeked babe five months old, and a little pink-nosed, white-as-snow, fluffy puppy. The mother was in the store. A little street waif of a girl, barefooted, bareheaded, dirty beyond compare, stood now caressing the soft cheek of the babe and now the snowy face of the little puppy, and the woman said, "Are you caring for these?" and a great smile broke over the dirty face of the little street waif as she said, "No, ma'am, I'm just a-lovin' of them." Even human love is divine. One blistering hot Sunday afternoon a boy was met two miles out from a Kansas town, pushing through the burning sands toward the country. "Where are you going?" asked the man who met him. "I am going out

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there to Sunday school," said the boy, pointing to a far-off country schoolhouse. "Are there no Sunday schools in town?" asked the man. "Yes," said the boy, "but they loves a feller out there." Love is the great magnet. Love is the divine spark in the human soul.

It was Raymond Lull who, in 1291, was determined to go as a Christian missionary among the bloodthirsty Mohammedans of northern Africa, who said in answer to the pleadings of his friends not to go, "He who loves not, lives not, and he who lives that life can not die." Love is life. Life is love. Men have talked much about the love of power. It is nothing compared to the power of love.

Silas Marner was made the victim of the blackest ingratitude. His friend was a thief, who thrust upon him the blame of a great crime. Suddenly this innocent man found all houses closed against him, while all markets refused to buy his wares. Through two long years right bravely he looked all men in the face. At length he could stand it no longer, for hunger and want drove him away from his home. Then he shook the dust off his feet

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## *So Loved*

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against his false friends who betrayed him. He lost faith in God and man—kindness in him soured into envy, sweetness into bitterness. Journeying away from home, he went to a distant village and there began to work again. There he toiled for fifteen years, and at the end of that time he had a pile of gold—but he was a miser. His gold he hid under the brick floor of his house when he was at his work. Each night he locked the door, then took his gold and poured it on the table and counted it.

But one evening on returning from his work, he lifted the bricks of the floor and, to his amazement, the hole was empty. His gold was gone. Benumbed and crazed with terror, he went everywhere looking for his money, but could not find it. Then when it dawned upon him that it was really gone, he sent forth a wild cry, and in his grief he rushed out of his house into the rain and storm of a wild night and wandered on and on, stupefied with pain. In the early morning he returned to his house. On nearing his home he saw through the door the glint of something yellow by his hearth. With a wild cry he rushed forward and caught

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it, thinking it was his gold. But it was not gold—it was something better. It was the yellow, golden curls of a little child, who had strayed into his house. The little wet thing stretched her hands toward him and lisped, "Papa." Broken-hearted, he took up the deserted child in his arms and pressed her to his bosom. As the weeks went on the little child took hold of his heart. For the child's sake, he turned again to his loom. Love brought back again industry and work. For the child's sake, he bought carpets for the bare floor, pictures for the walls. Love made him tender and unselfish. For the child's sake, he knelt one night and recited a child's prayer. Love would fain make a Christian of him, but still he hated men.

Years went on, and the child grew to young womanhood. One day a rich man's carriage stopped before his cottage door. Then the rich man told how this beautiful girl of eighteen was his daughter. She wandered away from home and they could not find her. Her father had a beautiful mansion and great wealth, which she would inherit. He told her about it all. But she refused to go with him. She turned away



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from it all, and for the love she bore Silas Marner, she put her arms about his neck and said, "He cared for me and toiled and brought me up." Then something gave way and Silas Marner wept. His heart was won and made over again. Then came confidence in God and man. Love destroyed avarice and purged away sin and ingratitude, for love is a cleanser, love is a transformer. It makes saints out of savages. It made a noble man out of Silas Marner, miser and atheist.

O, the transforming power of love! "Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed as but one day, for the love he had for her." Love's labor is always light. The greatest dream in marble is the Taj-Mahal temple of India. A young husband-prince began its erection as a palace for his beautiful young wife. The work was hardly begun when the young wife went down into the valley of motherhood, and the babe came back alone. The broken-hearted young husband cried, "My darling, you shall have your palace, though now it be your tomb. And so twenty thousand men for twenty years labored, and twenty million dollars were

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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expended, and it stood a dream in marble, the most wonderful temple of the world. But the most wonderful thing is not the temple, but the motto over the great doorway, "To the memory of an undying love." But even that is not the greatest wonder; but when you stand under that motto and repeat it out loud, it goes bounding and bounding up among the great heights of the temple, and rebounding back and back again, "To the memory of an undying love—undying love." What brought Christ down? Undying love. What nailed Him to the cross and made Him taste death for every man? Undying love.

The disciple that Jesus loved, the disciple that loved Jesus, outran all the others to the tomb. Love is swift winged. Harriet Beecher Stowe's slave who outran the bloodhounds and leaped the Ohio was nerved by love. "Love," that's the mightiest word ever lisp'd. Even human love is immeasurable and indescribable. Divine love—who can fathom it? "Love divine, all human love excelling." The prophet declares his love held him and would not let him go.

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## *So Loved*

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The apostle says, "The love of Christ constraineth me." The word of that apostle, "constraineth," is one of the most varied and rich in the Grecian tongue. "Peter's wife's mother was taken with a fever." "Taken with" is this same word, "constraineth." Love that burns one like a great fever. "The multitude did throng Him." That word "throng" is this same word, "constraineth." Love that presses one about like a great multitude. "Lay hold on eternal life." "Lay hold on" is that word, "constraineth." A love that seizes one and will not let him go. "They were driven by a fierce wind." "Driven by" is this same word, "constraineth." Love that becomes a mighty motive power in one's life. And of the disciples in the garden it is said, "They were wrapped in sleep." "Wrapped in," is this same word, "constraineth." "The love of Christ constraineth me." It swallows one up, hedges one about, possesses one, burns within one. Through Jeremiah the Lord speaks, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Solomon says, "He brought me into his banqueting house, and His banner over me was 'Love.' "

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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I once attended a Conference session of the Evangelical Denomination. On Sunday their Bishop Bowman preached. His subject was, "Heaven." After speaking some forty minutes, he flung out the question, "What language will we speak in Heaven?" When he had properly aroused the interest of the congregation, he said, "I know what language we will speak in Heaven—the language of Luther—'Ein feste burg ist unser Gott.'" And those hundred and fifty broad-shouldered German preachers made the church ring with their "Amens." But I went out from that service, and, recalling the few words of German that I could speak, I felt that there was something wrong. No, German won't be the language of Heaven. But what language will we speak in Heaven? We are told that they will come from the four winds of the world, that there will be multitudes from every land and language. All of the more than four hundred tongues of earth will be in Heaven. All are to join in the same prayer and praise and worship. What will be the language? There is but one universal language.

Stanley tells us that he saw scores of natives

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## *So Loved*

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in Africa whom Livingstone had led to Christ, and they could not understand a sentence that Livingstone spoke. In what language did he preach to them? J. Hudson Taylor says he often had missionaries who were the means of the conversion of many Chinese, before they had mastered the Chinese language. But recently a young man in a mission field was carried to his burial by nine young men whom he had led to Christ before he could utter one whole sentence in their native tongue. By what language did he reach them? There is but one universal language—the language of love. Is that poetic exaggeration? They asked Christ, “What are the commandments?” He answered, “Love God, love man—love is the commandments.” Christ pressed—compressed the ten commandments into one word. “Paul, how many great things are there?” “Three—faith, hope, love.” “Are they all equal?” “The greatest of these is love.” “Peter, what have you to say?” “Above all, brethren, have fervent love one for another.” “And John, you?” “Little children, be like God.” “What do you mean, John?” “God is love.” The song of the New Testa-

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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ment from beginning to end is, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Spurgeon shouts, "Heaven is but love spelled out large."

In Galatians there is a strange and striking passage—"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." A pupil in our public schools would not be permitted to say, "The fruit is," and then name nine fruits; but, "The fruits are." However, this is good grammar, as well as good truth. The first one is love, and the others are but love spelled differently. Joy is love exulting, peace is love in repose, long-suffering is love on trial, gentleness is love in society, goodness is love in action, faith is love in battle, meekness is love at school, temperance is love in training. The fruit of the Spirit is love spelled nine ways.

Paul asks, "Who can comprehend the length and breadth and depth of the love of God?" "Who can know the love of God that passeth knowledge?" There is but one answer, "No one." Four hundred and two times love weeps out, rings out, sings out in the Bible.

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## *So Loved*

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God is exceeding anxious that we get it that God loved. Loved? That's past. It may be then His love is a thing of the past, not present. Revelation 1:5: "Unto Him who loved us and washed us with His blood." But the Revised Version is, "Unto him who loveth us and washeth us."

Across the seas, in the beautiful churchyard of Everleigh, sleeps side by side, awaiting the resurrection, Charles Kingsley and his beautiful wife. A common tombstone over the two, and all there is on that tombstone is their names and three words in Latin—"Amavimus, Amamus, Amabimus"—we loved, we love, we will love. There is no tense that can express the love of God. It takes in all the present, all the past, all the future. "God loved." That is a past that is eternally present.

"God so loved." There is one word in this verse that is emphatic—one word in capitals—SO. That is the big word of the verse. That is the big word of the Book. "Let your light so shine;" "If God so clothe the grass of the field;" "Do you so even unto others;" "I have

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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not seen so great faith, no not in Israel;" "As the Father sent Me, so send I you;" "We love Him because He so loved us."

I recently had a funeral where the body of the dead was kept for ten days before the service. The people came from afar. I asked different ones where they were from, and their replies were, "I am from New York City," "I am from Atlanta," "I am from St. Louis," "I am from Portland, Oregon," "I am from Mexico City." At that funeral I quoted John 3:16, and then asked all to join, and lips that came from the four corners of this great continent joined in, "God so loved." And you could feel a great thrilling throb throughout that great concourse. Every man felt it was true that God so loved him. So? How much is so? How long is so? It's the little word, the big word of this verse. How long is it? It stretches up the Hudson, across the Empire State, over the Central Valley, up the Rockies, it leaps the western basin, climbs the Nevadas, out over the foaming Pacific, over the walls of China, across frozen Siberia, up the Ural, over the Alps, down the Rhine, out over the English Channel, across



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## *So Loved*

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the stormy Atlantic, past the Statue of Liberty lighting the world, back to New York. SO. Round and round as a ring that has no end, so is the love of God for you, my friend.

We say, "There's a wideness in God's love, like the wideness of the sea." But the sea is bounded by shores. God's love is boundless, shoreless. We say, "As the mountains round us tower, so the love of God." Aye, but the mountains stop. Whether it be Pike's Peak, 14,000 feet; or St. Elias, 14,000; or Chimborazo, 21,000; or Everest, 29,000, they all reach their limit. There is no limit to the love of God. Sometimes we liken the love of God to the river that flows on and on, making glad many a land; but after flowing on and on perhaps 4,000 miles, at last the longest river runs out into the deep and is done. The love of God never runs out, is never done. Paul speaks of the "unfailing love of Christ." "God so loved."

How much did Columbus know about America when he landed on a little island off the coast of the West Indies, never having seen a mountain or lake or valley or river of the continent? How much? Yet he knew much more

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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of America than we can know or comprehend of the love of God. "God so loved." How much is that? "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man die for his friends." God so loved that He died for His enemies. Calvary is the only measure of the love of God. It reaches from everlasting to everlasting. As far as the east is from the west, so long is so. We can not grasp it, we can not measure it, we can not comprehend it, but surely never again will we carelessly lisp these three words immortal—"God so loved."

“THE WORLD”

“Sun, moon, and stars convey Thy praise  
Round the whole earth, and never stand;  
So when Thy truth began its race,  
It touched and glanced on every land.

“Nor shall Thy spreading gospel rest  
Till through the world Thy truth has run;  
Till Christ has all the nations blessed  
That see the light or feel the sun.

“Great Sun of righteousness, arise,  
Bless the dark world with heavenly light;  
Thy gospel makes the simple wise,  
Thy laws are pure, Thy judgments right.”

## “THE WORLD”

WHEN Thomas Paine was about to publish his “Age of Reason,” Franklin wrote him and said, “Do n’t do it; the Bible is the best book the world has ever seen or is likely to see.” And the best book of the Bible is not Matthew, which brings Christ from Abraham as the Messiah; nor Mark, which begins at Malachi and brings us Christ as the obedient servant; nor Luke, which begins with Zacharias, and brings us Christ as the Son of Man; but John, who goes beyond Zacharias, Malachi, Abraham, Adam, beyond the stars, and brings Christ out of the bosom of the Father as the Lamb of God, come to bear away the sins of the world. And the best verse of this best Book is John 3: 16. I am not surprised that it is the favorite verse of Francis Clark, of the Christian Endeavor; the late Mrs. Bottome, of the King’s Daughters; J. Wilbur Chapman, the world-famed evangelist; the late Bishop Ninde; the late Ira Sankey, the great singer; and Moody,

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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the ever blessed. We study another of the great words in this great verse.

“God so loved the *world*.” You can’t get the measure of the love until you locate its object. A woman so loves. What? A baby or a poodle? You can’t tell the measure of the love until you locate the what of the love. “God so loved.” What? This city, state, country, the Anglo-Saxons? Why, there were n’t any Anglo-Saxons when He hung on the cross. Nay, the world; the wicked, wayward, wandering world. That takes in Asia, with her eight hundred and fifty million; Europe, with her three hundred and seventy-five million; Africa, with her one hundred and seventy million; North America, with her one hundred and fifty million; Australia, with her four million,—the world. That takes in the fifteen hundred million of the now, and the two hundred billion that have been, and the unnumbered trillions to be —the world.

It is easy to see how God could love some people. It is n’t hard for me to understand how God could love my mother, but me. It is easy to conceive that He could love John, but

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## *The World*

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Judas; Elijah, but Jezebel. It surely could not have been hard for Him to love Mary, who watched at the cross, but the wretches who, with hellish delight, drove the great spikes with their sledge-hammers into His hands and feet, and then with oaths, tore open His heart—how He could love them! And yet, while they were doing it, He cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Verily, He does n't seem to love people because they are good, but to make them good. We love people that are lovable, likable; we love saints, God loves sinners. Mother, have you ever said to your child, "If you are naughty, God won't love you?"

A child on the train was very restless. The mother had threatened it again and again. At last she shook it and said, "If you do n't behave, I will hand you over to the first policeman when we get to the station." Of course, the child knew the mother was not telling the truth, and of course the child only fidgeted the more. Another shake, and the mother said threateningly, "If you do n't behave, I will open the window and throw you out." Of course, the child

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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did not behave. A big commercial traveler stepped into the seat past the mother, raised the window, and took hold of the child. The mother in alarm said, "What are you going to do?" "Why," said the commercial traveler, "I am going to throw her out for you; she is too big for you to throw out." And the things that mother said to that traveling man would n't sound well to repeat. Mother, have you ever said to your child, "If you are naughty, God won't love you?"

I knew a girl that had the most wonderful hair of any child I ever saw, and her face and eyes matched her hair. Smallpox crept into that home one day. The poor little thing lost her golden locks and her glorious looks. It was weeks before the mother would listen to the little one's plea to give her a mirror. And when the poor thing saw that her beautiful hair was gone and her face was so marked and pocked, she wept out, "O mamma! you can't love me now." And what did that mother do? You know what she did. She just gathered that poor little thing in her arms and loved her, loved her until it seemed that she could n't love



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## *The World*

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her enough. Did that mother love the smallpox? Nay, she hated the smallpox, but she loved her child even the more, because its beauty had been so despoiled by the smallpox. God does not love sin. God does not love our sins, but He loves us in spite of our sins. He died not for saints, but for sinners. Yea verily, God does not love us because we are good, but to make us good.

God so loved the world, the wicked world. He poured His heart out over the fallen woman at the well, and Mary Magdalen with seven devils, and the woman taken in the very act of adultery, in the eighth chapter of John, and Matthew the defrauder, and Zaccheus the oppressor, and the sinning publican, and the dying thief. We have a saying, "You can always tell a man by the company he keeps." What company Christ kept! That is another truth that is a falsehood. You can always tell a man by the company he makes. Christ took outcast, lost, lustful sinners and made them, by His companionship, saints of God. Verily, He was no respecter of persons. He did n't die for Fifth Avenue, New York; nor Euclid Avenue, Cleve-

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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land; nor Michigan Avenue, Chicago; nor Woodward Avenue, Detroit—the world. He would have all men to be saved. God so loved the world. The six hundred and fifty million yellow, six hundred and forty million white, one hundred and sixty million black, thirty-five million brown, fifteen million red—the world. Pigmy and prince, Hottentot and crown head, Eskimo and millionaire, savage and civilized—the world. All peoples of all colors and all kinds, of all climes and all times—the world. The smallest, meanest, lowest, littlest, worst, the grandest, noblest, highest, purest, best—the world. God so loved the world. Do you get it?

A sheriff in a Texas town was waiting, with six handcuffed prisoners, for the train to carry them to the State penitentiary. Among the six criminals was one so hard-faced and rough-looking. He was going to serve a twenty-years' sentence for a great crime. The door of the station opened, and a little woman in a faded black dress and an old bonnet, and with a face so pinched of sorrow, slipped in. She looked around intently, and her eyes lit upon the hard-faced criminal. She quickly stepped to where

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## *The World*

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he sat. He looked up with an exclamation, "Mother, what are you doing here?" "I came to see you off, my son." "To see me off?" "Yes, Henry, do n't you remember when you were only six years old and started to school the first day, I walked down to the gate and saw you off, and all the way to the corner you kept turning and waving your hand at me? Then when you were twelve, and you went away from home for your first visit, I went to the station to see you off. Yes, Henry, I have come to see you off, and now you are going away again, and I must kiss you good-bye, Henry. The train is coming, Henry; kiss your old mother good-bye." And the hard-faced criminal at last turned his face up to the thin old face of the mother and she kissed him good-bye. "All aboard!" thundered the conductor. The little old woman waved her little black-bordered handkerchief at the window where Henry sat, and muttered, "Good-bye, Henry; be a good boy, Henry." That is the kind of world, and that is the kind of love.

It remained for the disciples whom Jesus loved to bring us, "He loved them to the utter-

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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most." Verily, He is no respecter of persons. He proved His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, He died for us.

The converted Irishman said, "He is the only One I ever found who would take a man without a character." He saves the worst to the uttermost. "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "I am come to seek and to save the lost." "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners." What good news! All wires flash it, all lips herald it, all papers print it. The world! "God so loved the world."

“THAT HE GAVE”

“Like a cradle rocking, rocking,  
    Silent, peaceful, to and fro,  
Like a mother’s sweet looks dropping  
    On the little face below,—  
Hangs the green earth, swinging, turning,  
    Jarless, noiseless, safe, and slow;  
Falls the light of God’s face bending  
    Down and watching us below.

“And as feeble babes that suffer,  
    Toss and cry, and will not rest,  
Are the ones the tender mother  
    Holds the closest, loves the best,—  
So when we are weak and wretched,  
    By our sins weighed down, distressed,  
Then it is that God’s great patience  
    Holds us closest, loves us best.

“O great heart of God! whose loving  
    Can not hindered be nor crossed;  
Will not weary, will not even  
    In our death itself be lost,—  
Love divine! of such great loving  
    Only mothers know the cost,—  
Cost of love, which, all love passing,  
    Gave a Son to save the lost.”

## “THAT HE GAVE”

“**G**OD so loved the world that He gave.” The Greek has it, “gave up.” There’s your atonement. A man’s gifts are the only measure of his love. Tell me how much a man gives, and I will tell you how much he loves. Then, certain millionaires whose names have filled large space in popular magazines must be great lovers, for they are great givers; do they not pour out their money by the millions? Whoever told you that these millionaires whose lists of benefactions fill columns have given much? All most of them have given never cost them as much as six breakfast buns cost many a poor man. How many of these millionaires ever did without a luxury, to say nothing of a necessity? Who gives? The widow who crouched in the shadows of the temple until all the millionaires had poured in their thousands, and then untied her little old handkerchief and let slip in so silently her two little mites, and went out from that presence to sleep on a bed of straw, for she had cast in all her living.

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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Not "How much of my money will I give to God?" but "How much of His money will I keep for myself?" Not "how much we give," but "how much we keep," is God's measure of our gifts. Tell me how much a man gives, and I will tell you how much he loves. The measure of the gift is the measure of the love. I have seen folks hand out nickels and dimes to the tramp. See you, in the measure of their pennies, the measure of their love for the tramp. I know some poor folks, so very poor, and yet because their little girl wanted a Shetland pony and a cart, O how they sacrificed to get it! and they counted it all joy to sacrifice for their child. It's just fun to do without things to give to those you love.

"God so loved the world, that He gave"—how much? When a man spends thirty dollars for his wife's hat and five dollars to send the gospel to the world, how much, think you, he loves? When a man has a hundred dollars to send the gospel to the ends of the earth, and a thousand dollars for the State committee of his own party, how much do you think he loves the world? He that loves not his brother on earth,



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## *That He Gave*

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think you he loves God in Heaven? "Stewards of the manifold grace of God," that's what we are. "God so loved the world that He gave up His only begotten Son." Gave Him up. O the cost of it to God, the tears of it, the tug of it, the heart-tearing of it!—God gave Him up—gave Him up freely, gladly, willingly. Christ's enemies did n't take His life; He laid it down. His was a voluntary sacrifice; He gave up His life.

The keeper of a drawbridge over a great river heard the thunder of the train, and just then his little child, playing by his side, rolled down the sharp embankment into that mad stream. He knew if he but plunged down after his child he could not close the drawbridge, and the trainload of passengers would plunge to their death. He hesitated a moment, and then slowly swung the great bridge out to its place, and then plunged into the wild waters and pulled out his dead child. He could n't save both. God could n't save His Son and save the world at the same time.

Away in the Northwest mining camps, Graham, the sky-pilot, rescued Nelson, the gambler. By and by Nelson took his gold and went to

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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San Francisco. Graham, knowing his past weakness, besought him not to go, but Nelson was sure he was strong enough to stand. Graham followed him. It was only a night or two until the gambling sharks had him, and when they could not beat him at the game, one of them pulled his revolver, when Graham, who all the time had been present incognito, flung himself between that revolver and Nelson. When Nelson bent over the open grave of that sky-pilot, he said, "Now I understand for the first time the meaning of the Scripture, 'He loved me and gave Himself up for me.'"

So, by such figures we try to get it, to grasp what it meant for God to give up His only begotten Son, but there is no comparison between a father giving up his child or a friend dying for a friend, and God giving up His Son. We forget that all of us, like sheep, have gone astray, and the Lord has piled up on Him the iniquity of us all. O, the load of iniquity that was piled on Him! Then with the load of our iniquity piled on Him, because God could not look upon sin with any degree of allowance, He turned His back on the cross where His Son was dying. No

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## *That He Gave*

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wonder it was dark for six hours; for the Light of the World had gone out. God turned His back on His Son until, in His inexpressible agony, that Son cried, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He expected others to forsake Him, but not His Father. It was hard for the Son to die. Long before He came to that cross, He sweat no longer water, but blood, and that was not Calvary; that was only Gethsemane. Hard for the Son to die, but harder far for the Father to see Him die.

Mount Everest is five and a half miles high. Once there, you are far above pestilence and scorching heat and ravenous beasts. Off with your hats, for you are in the presence of the highest mountain of the world. The highest? Mount Everest is not the highest; the highest is Mount Calvary. Mount Everest gives you a vision of the Himalayas; Calvary gives you a vision of the love of God. Calvary is the highest mountain of the world.

A poor drayman in New York City came home one night to find his little girl dying. He was a man very wicked, and she made him promise that he would not swear nor drink nor

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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beat her mother any more. And the next morning, with his little girl dead, he went out and painted on his poor dray two words in crude letters, "My Darling"—a constant reminder to him of his promise. So Calvary, dear Calvary, where Jesus died to make me free, is a constant reminder of God's love for me. God so loved the world that He gave up, gave up, the priceless gift of His only begotten Son. Surely, if God gave up His Son for us, we will count it all joy to give up ourselves to Him.

“WHOSOEVER”

“Let every mortal ear attend,  
And every heart rejoice;  
The trumpet of the gospel sounds  
With an inviting voice.

“Ho! all ye hungry, starving souls,  
That feed upon the wind,  
And vainly strive with earthly toys  
To fill an empty mind.

“Ho! ye that pant for living streams,  
And pine away and die,  
Here you may quench your raging thirst  
With springs that never dry.”

## “WHOSOEVER”

**I** ONCE asked Stephen Nkoiyo, a boy born in the heart of the Congo, Africa, with a face as black as the midnight, what was the thing his people liked the best, and he repeated, “Nzambi kadi zona kwingi kuzona usi idiau kuwanina muana andi wadi mosi kaka vo wonsi wuna wo sabuvu kena bungwa ko kasitu wuna baka moiyo keumani.” I said, “Stephen, that does n’t mean anything to me; you will have to put it in American.” And he translated it, “God for love so much He loved world that He gave Son, His one only, that whosoever Him put faith will perish not, but shall have life never end.”

The striking thing about those strange words is the first word, “Nzambi.” That is the word in the Congo region for God, and the root of that word is “am.” The word for God among the Crete Indians is “Maneto,” and the root is “ma,” which is our “am.” One of the most remarkable things in the world is that the

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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word for God in the darkest lands among the lowest peoples is "am." God never gave Himself a name but once. When God commanded Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let the people go, Moses said, "And when Pharaoh asks me who sent me, who am I to say sent me?" And God said, "Tell him I AM sent you." How did these nations of the earth get the name of God that He gave Himself? This argues for a common origin of the human race.

These same peoples of the Congo practice the rite of circumcision. When you ask them why, they tell you that their fathers practiced it before them. The same is found to be true among all the tribes of Africa. All this argues a common origin of the races. Then, too, you find among these peoples and all peoples of every continent and island the story of the flood, the story of creation, the belief of immortality, Heaven, hell. When you find a thing that all peoples believe, you may be sure you have found a thing that is true. Universal belief is true belief.

But of all things that you find among all nations, nothing is so striking as the name for



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## *Whosoever*

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God—"AM." "I AM," God said to Moses; "this is My name through all generations." The largeness of these two words. It is as though God handed humanity a blank check, saying, "Fill it out." "Art thou in darkness?" "I am thy light." "The light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, the light of the world." "The Lord is my light and my salvation." "Art thou orphaned?" "I am thy Father," who forgets not how, as an innocent child, the boy once played at the Father's knee, and that Father now sits on the housetop, bowed and broken, looking, longing, wondering, waiting for the return of the ragged prodigal, waiting ready to leap and lavish upon him love untold and untellable. He would lead us to say, "Our Father." "Hast thou wandered astray?" "I am the Good Shepherd." But, finding the disobedient, runaway sheep, He does not beat it as it deserves and as we do, does not even drive it home, but seeing its stone-bruised, bleeding feet, wraps it in His great cloak against the biting night storm and bears it tenderly home. He would lead us to say, "The Lord is my Shepherd." "Art thou comfortless?" "I

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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am thy comfort." "Like as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." "A mother may forget her nursing child, yet will I never forget thee."

"Think not thou canst sigh a sigh  
And thy Maker is not by;  
Think not thou canst weep a tear  
And thy Maker is not here."

He is here—God, thy Maker. "Art thou friendless?" "I am the Friend that sticketh, sticketh, sticketh closer than a brother." A Friend indeed, a Friend in need.

"Far out on the desolate billow  
The sailor sails the sea,  
Alone with the night and the tempest,  
Where countless dangers be;  
Yet, never alone is the Christian  
Who lives by faith and prayer,  
For God is a Friend unfailing,  
And God is everywhere."

"Art thou hungry?" "I am the Bread of life; eat and live." "Is thy throat scorched with thirst?" "I am the Living Water; drink and be satisfied." "Art thou weary? I am the Shiloh, the Rest-giver." "I am thy all in all." Yes,

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## *Whosoever*

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Nzambi—God so loved, is the best thing that ever went to the Congo, and the best word the world ever heard.

The Sunday before Benjamin Harrison left Indianapolis to become President of the United States, he presented each member of his great Sunday school class with a morocco-bound copy of the Gospel of John, with John 3:16 underlined in red, and in the fly-leaf written, "The best message this world ever had from its best Friend." On that famous five o'clock in the morning, when Joshua Speed came upon Abraham Lincoln reading his Bible in the White House, he discovered, when he bent over Lincoln's shoulder, that he was reading the third chapter of John, and had his finger hard upon this verse.

Francis Junius, the great scholar, when young, drifted into skepticism, and one day his father put on his dresser this book open at this verse, this verse underlined. In a flash young Francis saw it all—himself, his sins, his future, God, love, the cross. Great sweat broke from his brow, and shuddering, he fell sobbing to his,

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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knees, and there the miracle of the ages happened, the lost skeptic found the living Lord. "God so loved the world."

"God." O, the height and length and breadth and depth and measureless, fathomless, endlessness of that word, God!

"So loved." "All things on earth shall wholly pass away except the love of God; it shall live and last for aye."

"For the love of God is broader  
Then the measure of man's mind,  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wondrously kind."

"Love divine, all love excelling."

"The world." He proved His love for us by loving us when we were loveless. Verily, He is no respecter of persons. Having loved, He loved to the uttermost. No wonder He draws all men. The world, with its teeming millions, its weak millions, its wicked millions.

"That He gave up His only Son." O, the priceless cost of us! We are not bought with silver and gold and such cheap things, but with the precious blood of Christ. He loved us and bought us with His blood.

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## *Whosoever*

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“Whosoever.” A Dutch farmer in South Africa, seeing a Hottentot reading his Bible, said, as he kicked him, “That Book is n’t for such as you.” “Indeed it is.” “How do you know?” “Why, my name is in it.” “Your name, where?” “Why, right here.” And he laboriously spelled out John 3:16 until he came to “who-so-ever,” and slowly spelling it out, he said, “There it is.”

The most tragic hour of my life, I believe, was one Sunday morning in the State penitentiary of a Western State. I was there because I knew a pardon would be read that morning for one of the men, Henry Curtis. Henry Curtis, under greatest provocation and beside himself in a fit of temper, had killed a man, but he was not a murderer at heart. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. He had already served seventeen years. Some years after his imprisonment he was converted, and when we organized a Y. M. C. A. in that penitentiary he was elected president. One year we held the State Convention of that State in that city. He wrote a letter to the convention, in which he said, “We are with you in spirit; circumstances

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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over which we have no control make it impossible for us to be with you in body." That letter indicated that he had a head as well as a heart.

The Y. M. C. A. fellows became interested in him, and when a good Christian was elected governor, we worked for his pardon. On this Sabbath morning I sat on the platform with the warden and the chaplain. The warden stood and said, "Before the service concludes, I will read a pardon from the governor for one of the prisoners."

The chaplain then preached a never-to-be-forgotten sermon on "The great pardon." At its close, the warden stood and held the pardon in his hand. You could literally hear the hearts of those eight hundred and ninety men beat. Then he read the name, "Henry Curtis," and said, "Henry Curtis may step to the platform." There was not a move. Again he repeated the name, and then the chaplain stepped down and touched him on the shoulder and said, "Henry, have you forgotten your name?" And, looking like one dazed, he said, as he touched himself, "Me?" "Why, yes; did n't you hear your name?" "Why, I did n't

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## *Whosoever*

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think such news could be for me. I thought there must be another Henry Curtis." I am so glad the Lord did n't put in "God so loved Elmer Ellsworth Helms," for there is another Elmer Ellsworth Helms in a little hamlet in Indiana; perhaps He would have meant that one and not this one. But, "Who-so-ever"—that sweeps us all in—good and bad, rich and poor, black and white—who-so-ever. That's my name. I am a universalist; I believe who-so-ever will may come. God is a universalist; He would have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. But ye will not come that ye might have life. The trouble is not with God, but with us.





“BELIEVETH”

“There is no unbelief;  
Whoever plants a leaf beneath the sod,  
And waits to see it push away the clod,  
He trusts in God.

“Whoever says, when clouds are in the sky,  
‘Be patient, heart, light breaketh by and by,’  
Trusts the Most High.

“Whoever sees, ‘neath Winter’s field of snow,  
The silent harvest of the future grow,  
God’s power must know.

“Whoever lies down on his couch to sleep,  
Content to lock each sense in slumber deep,  
Knows God will keep.

“Whoever says, ‘To-morrow,’ ‘The unknown,’  
‘The future,’ trusts unto that power alone  
He dares disown.

“The heart that looks on when the eyelids close,  
And dares to live when life has only woes,  
God’s comfort knows.

“There is no unbelief;  
And day by day and night unconsciously,  
The heart lives by that faith the lips deny  
God knoweth why.”

## “BELIEVETH”

**B**READ can not keep a man from starving unless he eat it. Water can not keep a man from famishing unless he drink it. Clothes can not keep a man from freezing unless he wrap himself in them. Believing is reaching out and taking the bread of life, eating and living. Believing is taking the cup and drinking the water of life and being satisfied. Believing is wrapping one's self in the robe of righteousness against the chilly frost of sin. It matters not what God is, and what He has done and what He has given for man, if there is no way for man to get to God or God to get to man, of what avail is it?

Surely, if God has done so much for man, given so much to man, then He has provided a way for man to lay hold of God's great gift. Believing is that way. But mere believing is not enough. "The devils believe," but they are not saved. To believe and fear is not enough. "The devils believe and tremble." "With the

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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heart, man believeth unto righteousness." Believing with the head is not enough. To give assent, consent, to nod, to approve, is one thing; to lay hold on, seize, appropriate, make one's own, is quite another thing. A man may know his Bible so well he can stick a pin through the leaves and can tell what word on each page the pin pierces, and he may mentally consent to it all, and yet not know God. To believe is not to accede, approve. That's a mere intellectual performance. To believe is to nestle the soul in God, to embosom one's self in God. To consent to God with the head, and to lay hold of Him with the heart, are vastly different things.

A little fellow had a splendid father; one of those men that believed everything with his head and nothing with his heart. One day the little fellow said, "Mother, is papa a Christian?" "Why do you ask, my son?" "Why, I never hear papa pray." And the mother said, "Willie, suppose you ask him to-night." As usual, the father went up to kiss Willie good-night when he came home, Willie being in bed. "Papa, I want you to do something for me; will you do

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## *Believeth*

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it?" "Why, of course I'll do it, my dear."  
"Well, papa, I want you to get down and pray."  
"Why, my son, I could n't do that." "But you promised me." "But I do n't know how."  
"Well, you get down, papa, and I will teach you." He could n't help himself. On his knees, with the little fellow's hand upon the father's head, the little fellow said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God!" And that father sobbed until he shook the bed as he cried, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, for Jesus' sake! Lord, I believe, help!" And for the first time that father believed. You who have been assenting, consenting, acceding, approving—that's not believing.

God is so anxious that we understand what believing is, that He puts the same thing in different words again and again, that we may grasp it. John 1:12, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." Receiving is believing. Rev. 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will open the door, I will come in." Opening the door, admitting Him, is believing. Heb. 7:25, "Wherefore, He is able to save all

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him." Coming is believing. Isa. 55:6, "Seek the Lord while He may be found." Seeking is believing. Rom. 10:13, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Calling is believing.

Just at the close of the Civil War, a number of Southern soldiers somehow got separated from the army and got too far North. For days they wandered about, hiding in the woods, fearing every hour that some Northern soldiers would see them and make them prisoners. They were almost starving when a Southern officer chanced to come upon them. "What are you doing here?" he asked. They told him they had gotten lost, and were afraid of their lives. "Why! the war is over; you can go to the nearest town, whether it is North or South, it does not matter, for peace has been proclaimed." Peace had been purchased, peace had been provided for them, but they had not received, believed. Whosoever believeth is at peace. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God."

A Brooklyn newsboy was caught and crushed

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## *Believeth*

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under a great wagon. He was all bruised and torn. They picked him up and hurried him to a hospital. In the hospital they hurried him to the operating table. Quickly they were ready to operate, hoping to save his life. The little fellow raised his little hand and said, "Doctor, am I going to die?" The doctor said, "You're badly hurt, my boy, you are badly hurt." "But Doctor, do you think I am going to die?" "Why, I hope not, my boy, but you are badly hurt." "Doctor, wait a minute. I have never made a public profession; I want to do it now." Then he turned his eyes upon the white-angled nurse and said, "Will you hold my hand?" All heads were bowed. Gripping the nurse's hand and closing his eyes, the little fellow murmured, "I - believe - in - Jesus - Christ - my - Sav——" and his lips were sealed still. He was in the arms of the Great Physician. That is believing. Believing, bridges the chasm between man and God, earth and Heaven, the sinner and the Savior. Believing is the ladder over which we climb out of guilt into grace, up to glory. Believing wings one to God.





“ IN HIM ”

“Thou art the Way:—to Thee alone  
From sin and death we flee;  
And he who would the Father seek,  
Must seek Him, Lord, by Thee.

“Thou art the Truth:—Thy Word alone  
True wisdom can impart;  
Thou only canst inform the mind,  
And purify the heart.

“Thou art the Life:—the rending tomb  
Proclaims Thy conquering arm;  
And those who put their trust in Thee  
Nor death nor hell shall harm.

“Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life;  
Grant us that Way to know,  
That Truth to keep, that Life to win,  
Whose joys eternal flow.”

## “ IN HIM ”

NOT in a creed, not in the Church, not in the preacher, not in here, in Him; not in my goodness, but in His grace. Salvation is not found here, but there. “There is none that doeth good.” “The heart is deceitful above all things.” “Can the leopard change his spots?” There is no working out of one’s own salvation. “In Him.” That’s Paul’s, “I know whom I have believed,” or, as the Greek puts it, “I know Him.” Do you know Him? Do you know Him as your Savior? Francis Ridley Havergal, the writer of so many sweet hymns, dying, cried, “My King, my King!” Is He yours? Do you know Him? You know lots of things, lots of people, but do you know Him? “Whosoever believeth in Him.” “There is only one name under Heaven, given among men, whereby we may be saved.” A missionary in India and a fellow laborer sat one evening in their tent disheartened. All the week they had labored to no purpose. Even that very morn-

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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ing they had gone at four o'clock to preach in the villages. Returning, they could but say, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" Weary and discouraged, as they sat in their tent they chanced to look out through the meshes. A few rods away they saw a striking sight. An old gray-haired Brahman had erected a small shrine against the trunk of a banyan tree, and was lost in his devotions. With beads in hand, round and round he performed his circumambulations, keeping his face ever toward the shrine, and reciting over and over his prayers. Each time he came in front of the shrine he prostrated himself upon the ground. Then up and around again. At last he sank exhausted.

Greatly impressed with the old Brahman's earnestness, the two missionaries went out and asked him what he sought by these genuflections, circumambulations, and prayers.

"O sirs," said he, in a voice that came from his soul, "I am seeking to get rid of the burden of sin. All my life I have been seeking it, but each effort I make is as unsuccessful as the one before, and still the burden is here. My pilgrimages, prayers, and penances for sixty years

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## *In Him*

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have all been in vain. Alas! I know not how my desire can be accomplished.”

Then, in answer to their inquiry, he gave them the story of his life. In early life he had been sorely troubled by the thought of his unexpiated sins. His parents died when he was seventeen, leaving him, as the sole heir, great wealth. He consulted the priests, and they told him if he would give all his wealth to build a temple, his burden would go. “I gave the load of my money, but the load of my sin became no lighter.”

Then they told him to go to Benares, the holy city. Two thousand miles on foot he went, and spent two years in its temples. But all this time the burden grew. Then, advised by the priests, he spent two years bathing in the holy Ganges. “Ganges,” said he, “washed the foulness of my skin, but did not change the foulness of my soul.”

Then again, afoot, nearly three thousand miles, to another holy city, and another. Being without money, he lived on roots and nuts, slept out in the drenching rain, fell many a time, fainting and near dead, under the scorch-

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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ing sun. For years he trudged through the tropical jungles in a vain search for relief from the burden of sin.

“And now, sirs,” said he, “my life is almost gone; my hair is thin and white; my eyes are dim; my teeth are gone; my cheeks are sunken; my body is wasted; I am an old, old man; and yet, sirs, the burden of my sin is heavier than when I was a young man. O sirs, does your Veda tell how I can get rid of this burden of sin and be at peace? Our Vedas have not shown me.”

Looking into that hungry old face, how gladly the missionaries told him of Him who said, “Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” How eagerly he listened! “Would you like to have Him?” asked the missionary. “O yes, sir, if He could take away this awful ——” “And just then,” according to the testimony of the old Brahman, “the load was all gone, and it was so peace in here,” pointing to his breast. And his face shone like the face of an angel. Verily, “There is none other name under Heaven, given among men, whereby ye can be saved,” but that name.

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## *In Him*

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There is only one way. He said, "I am the Way." There is only one door. He said, "I am the Door."

He has the key to the city. How are you going to get in without the key? And how are you going to get the key without a personal acquaintance with Him. "Blessed are they who have washed their robes and made them white that they may have a right to the key and may enter in through the door into the city." Have you the key? It's in the Christ hand. "In Him." I know nothing that more needs emphasis than "in Him," in these days of formalism, externalism, make-believe moralism. "In Him." It's Christ or nothing.

The old captain of the *Merrimac* was an inmate of the Pennsylvania Soldiers' Home. He was a skeptic. For long the chaplain tried to get him to read the Bible, but he would not. At last he said to the captain, "Read it, and mark in red anything that you do n't believe. Begin with the Gospel of John." The captain, with a glitter in his eye, took up the challenge. He was sick at the time, confined to bed. Every few hours the chaplain, passing his door, would

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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call in and say, "Captain, have you marked anything yet?" The old captain would grin, but say nothing. After a day or two, when the chaplain stepped in, there lay the old captain dead, with his Bible open. The chaplain leafed through the Gospel of John. Nothing marked in all the first chapter, nor all the second chapter, nor all the third, until he came to John 3:16, and in red was written, "I have cast my anchor in a safe harbor, thank God!" He 'd found the only anchor that could grip and the only rock that could hold. It was John 3:16. Father Taylor, of Boston, used to cry, "My anchor holds." There is only one anchor that will hold. There is only one anchor that can hold, "believeth." There is only one place that will hold, "in Him."

John B. Gough tells us that one Sunday he slipped into a church, and into a pew. He was not conscious that any other one was in the pew until some one asked what hymn it was they had announced. Gough turned to look into the most repulsive face he ever saw. The man was not only blind, but his eyes were awful to behold. And he was suffering from some nervous



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## *In Him*

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disease that made his face twitch most terribly. Gough says when they began to sing, the harsh, discordant, guttural notes of the man beside him almost drove him mad. But when they came to the verse:

“Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,

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O lamb of God, I come, I come.”

Mr. Gough turned, and the poor man had lifted his sightless eyes to Heaven and, with the hot tears burning down his poor, twitching cheeks, he cried it out of his very soul. Mr. Gough declared, “I have heard the finest strains of orchestra, choir, and soloist that the world has ever produced, but I never heard music until I heard that blind man sing out, sob out, “O, Lamb of God, I come, I come!”

So we, blind and destitute and ruined and disfigured and unsightly and repulsive of sin, all we can do is to cry, just cry, only cry, “Just as I am, I come”—and come. He waits for you, He wants you, He will welcome you. “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” That is your name. Come, step on His torn hand; He will lift you safely over the chasm. Look and live.



“PERISH”

“Come, wandering sheep, O come!  
I ’ll bind thee to My breast,  
I ’ll bear thee to thy home,  
And lay thee down to rest.

“I saw thee stray forlorn,  
And heard thee faintly cry,  
And on the tree of scorn,  
For thee I deigned to die.  
What greater proof could I  
Give than to seek the tomb?  
Come, wandering sheep, O come!”

## “PERISH”

**J**OHAN EVERETT CLOUGH recently died in Rochester, N. Y., at the home of his brother-in-law, Professor Rauschenbush, of the Rochester University. Many years ago the Baptists were about to give up their work in Telugu, India, when there appeared in their missionary office in Boston, a lean, long, lank young fellow from the prairies of Iowa, and asked the privilege of going. He looked anything but promising, but since they were going to give it up anyhow, and he was willing to go without salary or guarantee, they let him go. When he stepped off the boat at Bombay, there were thrown off some surveying instruments, sent out by the English Government to be used in running a canal through the Telugu country. There was to have been on that same steamer an English surveyor, but he missed his boat. Five thousand men were ready to work, the instruments were at hand, but no surveyor.

“God moves in a mysterious way, His won-

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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ders to perform." Young Clough was a civil engineer. He offered his services to the government, without money and without price. Around the camp-fire at night, through a native interpreter, he learned to say John 3:16, and he repeated it over and over to that great company of natives. By and by he learned a few sentences in their tongue about each of the great words of this verse, and that first year he baptized five thousand and sixty-one; in two years, over eleven thousand; in a single day, two thousand; and with his own hand he baptized more than sixty thousand. He has left two sons behind him, now that he is gone, to carry on his great work. For thirty-four years his text was John 3:16.

Reverently, God did His best in this verse. No wonder Luther said, "It's the gospel in a nutshell." It's the Bible in twenty-five words. It spells:

God so loved the world, that He gave His  
Only begotten  
Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not  
Perish, but have  
Everlasting  
Life.

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## *Perish*

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This verse has in it four great things: A great personality—God; a great fact—loved the world; a great result—that He gave His only begotten Son; a great purpose—that men might be saved.

“Should not perish.” Perish—then it ’s possible to perish. “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save the lost.” Then, there are lost men. “I am come that you might have life.” Then, there are men dead in trespasses and in sins. “They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” Then, there are men sick and in need of healing. “I am the Light of the world.” Then, there are men who are in gross darkness. “Perish.” Is that a little word? A light word? Did God just put that in to fill up? Does that read like, “If you don’t repent a little and be converted in a measure, you will be damned somewhat? “Perish”—that ’s deep as eternity, with solemn awfulness. “Whosoever believeth in Me shall be saved, but whosoever believeth not, shall perish.”

“Perish”—that ’s a continuous future; that ’s for ever and ever perishing, but never perished. Do you see any glimmer of hope in that word, any ray of light? Think you that it is a little

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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thing to turn one's back on God, a trifle to tread under foot the blood of the covenant, of no importance that, Cain-like, Adam-like, prodigal-like, you go your own way? "Perish"—it's an awful thing to perish. And it is so easy. True, God is not less interested, less persistent than the devil. True, God holds on to a man to the very end, and if he perish, it is against the utmost God can do. But while "Narrow is the way that leads to life, broad is the way that leads to death, and many go in thereat." The way to death is broad, and many find it. The way to life is narrow, and few find it. Millions of apple blossoms to thousands of apples. What becomes of the millions of blossoms? They perish. Thousands of spawn to hundreds of fish. What becomes of the many spawn? They perish. Many eggs, few fowl. It is easy to perish.

Rebecca Goldberg, aged four, and Tessie Satriani, aged ten, whose parents are next-door neighbors at Corona, Long Island, were picking grapes in the Goldberg yard one afternoon, while Mrs. Goldberg watched them from her window. After stepping into the kitchen for a few min-



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## *Perish*

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utes, the mother returned to the window, but saw no children. She went out to find them, and, to her horror, she saw that the weight of the children upon the lid of an old well had broken it, and that the children had fallen through it into the water. The cistern, which was twenty feet deep, had four feet of water in it. The mother, in looking down, saw the clothing of her child and knew that the children had fallen through. The neighbors secured long-handled rakes and drew out the lifeless bodies of the children. Every effort was made by the physician to resuscitate them, but all in vain. Some of the most beautiful and luscious grapes in the arbor grew just over the top of the well, and the little ones, in undertaking to reach them, fell into the water. While reaching for grapes they perished. Yea, it is easy to perish and awful

Some years ago, our representative at Canton, China, after having served a good many faithful years, started to return to this country with his wife and three children. It is well remembered to this day how that great ship went down right at the Golden Gate at San

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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Francisco, and he and his wife and children all perished. When the news reached his old mother, who had lived in anticipation of seeing her long-absent son and family in a few days, she cried out, "It is like perishing on one's own doorstep." Yea, it is an awful thing to perish. But it is a thousand times more awful to perish in sight of the cross—yes, in spite of the cross. You've seen copies of Schenck's famous painting, "Lost"—a flock of sheep caught by a blizzard. The fierce cold had twisted their wool into icicles, their blood is congealing, they are blinded by the fury of the storm, humped together, with the black, bitter blizzard biting them to the bone. Yonder a great opening in the rock, cross-shaped. In that open heart of the rock is shelter, but the sheep are not looking that way; their backs are to it; they are n't headed that way. It's an awful thing to perish. It's a thousand times more awful to perish in sight of the cross, in spite of the cross.

The mother of a wayward boy sickened and suddenly died. Night after night that boy had broken his father's and mother's heart by going in the broad way of death. The father thought

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## *Perish*

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that surely his boy would stay in with him the night after the funeral, but as soon as the supper was over the boy prepared to go out. The father begged of him to stay in with him that one night. The boy pushed toward the door. The father laid himself down across the threshold and said, "My son, if you will go out to-night, you will have to go over my prostrate body." And that wicked, wayward boy deliberately stepped over the body of his father and went out into darkness, to death. Yes, men can perish, but they must do it over the prostrate, pierced body of the Lord Christ.

If men refuse bread, they will starve; if men refuse water, they will famish; if they refuse clothes, they will freeze. "How can we escape if we refuse so great salvation?" How? That is a question that has never been answered; there is no answer.

In an Alpine village, some American tourists found the villagers in sorrow. A Harvard student lay crushed. He had crossed the seas and come to climb the Alps. Up the dizzy heights, he stood upon a slender peak. On the way back he said to the guide, "I am tired of these ropes

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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tied to me; I can take care of myself." The guide protested, and besought him and warned him, but he flung off the ropes and said, "I am able to take care of myself." In a few minutes he stepped on what looked to be snow, but proved to be slippery ice, and in a moment, hundreds of feet below, he was a crushed, dead mass. Men who will follow their own way, who will follow the devices of their own hearts, who refuse to be bound to God, who have a will of their own, a way of their own, will perish, in sight of the cross, in spite of the cross. "Not perish." Thank God for the "not." "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish."

“EVERLASTING LIFE”

“Jesus, wilt Thou go before  
On life’s pathway evermore?  
We will not delay, the while,  
After Thee in faith to toil.  
Lead us by Thy gentle hand  
To our blessed Fatherland.

“If the way be rough and drear,  
Firmly let us persevere,  
And in darkest days refrain  
At their burdens to complain;  
For through sorrows here must lie  
Ways that lead to life on high!”

## “EVERLASTING LIFE”

LIFE. Life fills a large place in the world, the Bible, and science, and it's the all of Heaven. Life—what is life? We know little of it. We know some of its manifestations. It means the eye to flash, the pulse to throb, the blood to beat hot, the cheek to flush with health, the face to glow. Life means much to us, everything to us, but who knows what it is? Who can define it? Who can even define physical life?

Herbert Spencer gave us the definition of physical life that was standard for thirty years, and then after thirty years, he went back on his own definition. If physical life is beyond definition, what of spiritual life? And, if not spiritual, what of eternal life?

Is eternal life, everlasting life, a matter of the almanac? Is life that lasts ever and everlasting life one and the same? Eternal life. And what is this eternal life? When one man has it, and another man has it not, do they just belong to different standards, but in the same

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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school? Is human life all of a piece, of the same fundamental essence, and varying only in quality and degree? Is eternal life only common life refined, or is it a new creation? Is eternal life just life in the higher grades, and can we be schooled and cultured into it? That is certainly the basis and trend of many men's reasoning. Life to them, in all its human range, would be imaged in a column of Aberdeen granite which stands in the museum of the University of Edinburgh. The column is of one unbroken piece, but it is arranged in ascending sections to represent the different processes and stages through which the granite passes from the quarry to the polished shaft. The pedestal is rough, jagged, and primitive, just as it left the quarry, bearing all the marks of the blasting. And then follow layer upon layer, each succeeding one being subjected to a more rigid discipline than its predecessor, until every uncouthness is left behind, and all its wealthy and exquisite veins are discovered in the refined and shining product. And that, I say, is how many people reason about eternal life. Eternal life is just common life perfected. Common life is the



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## *Everlasting Life*

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rough-hewn block; eternal life is the same block chastened and refined. The two do not represent a change of substance; they represent differences effected by labor and culture. And so eternal life is just an accomplishment; it belongs to a different standard, but not to a different order." And is that eternal life, and is that the difference between life and eternal life? What is eternal life? Who can define it? Who can define love, thought, genius? There are lots of things we possess that we can not define.

John says more about eternal life than all the others, but he never attempts to define it. He describes it, suggests its nature and source, and tells us many things about it, but he never defines it. The word translated, "eternal life," occurs one hundred and twenty-five times in the New Testament, but nowhere is there any attempt at definition. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life." That suggests its source, but does not define it. Seven times in First John alone we run across the expressions, "being born again," "born from above," "born anew," "begotten of God." All these point to the origin of life, but they do not define it.

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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“You hath He made alive.” That indicates it ’s from God, but there is no definition in it. “Christ liveth in me.” That again points to God as its source, but does not hint at definition. Life is not precept, or right living, or influence, or example. These are very desirable, but these are the effects of life.

What do we know about life? The great Gordian Knot that all scientists have vainly tried to cut for centuries has been, “Whence life?” Some years ago the great Lord Kelvin, of England, cried, “I have solved it; life came to this planet, fell on this planet from some other planet.” But he had solved nothing, for scarcely was the declaration out of his mouth than it was spoiled by the question, “How did life get on that other planet?” Little do we know about life; there is only one thing we do know—that it has to be given. There is no such thing as spontaneous generation in the physical world. Hæckel found that out to his mortification. Life had to be given to Adam; it has to be given to every plant, to every man. Spontaneous generation is not true in the physical world; it ’s not true in the spiritual world.

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## *Everlasting Life*

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Life has to be given. The Christian life is a gift. "He that hath the Son, hath life." "I am come that you might have life." "In Him was life." Life—all life, Christian life, eternal life, has to be given, and there is but one source—God. "This is life eternal, that we may know Thee, the only true God." If we do n't know God, we have not eternal life. Two men walk side by side. One possesses eternal life, the other does not. How came the one into the possession? Are these two men in the same school, only in different grades? They are not. The man who possesses eternal life and the man who does not possess it, live in two different worlds; and the passing from one into the other is not a matter of graduation, but re-creation. We are not promoted, but born into eternal life. It is not attained, but imparted. It is not the product of culture or training, but of a new seed implanted. It is not the old life changed, but a new life begun. How may we come in possession of it? "The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." While "the wages of sin is death," eternal life is a free gift, not earned, not bought, not bargained for, but given free

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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and freely. "Blessed are the poor." "And this is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Life—eternal life is from God, by God, and through God, and with God forever.

"With God." That must have been what Paul meant when he said, "I long to depart and to be with Christ." That 's what Stephen must have had in heart when he looked up and cried, "Lord Jesus, receive me." Old John Knox, the old hero of the sixteenth century, the Bismarck of his time, the Savonarola of Scotland, the man who feared not the face of man nor of queen, in his last hours, when so weak he could not speak, a friend said to him, "Have you hope?" And he lifted his long finger and pointed up, pointed up to life eternal with God. "Shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:16! O this verse of verses, this gospel in a nutshell, this Bible in twenty-five words. It begins with God and ends with eternal life. Not eternal life insurance, but eternal life. Through this verse, God does His best with our lame language to show us ourselves, lost sinners, perishing, and to show us

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## *Everlasting Life*

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Himself and the way back to Him. This verse bridges the chasm between the worlds; it's the ladder up which sinful men may climb to God. He that does n't find God through this verse, will never find Him. Some years ago, while doing evangelistic work in a Western college, one evening I heard a knock at my door, and in walked a young man whose face I recalled having seen in the meetings. He told me his name, and before I could ask anything further, he also told me the story of his life. He was born in the southern part of Texas. His father died when he was six months of age; his mother was a Catholic. When eleven years old he ran away from home, and for seven years he had floated all over several Western States, and at last drifted into this college. The next morning when we went down to the city, he showed me many saloons, gambling dens, and worse places of vice, where he spent many hours, many nights after the Faculty were asleep. He was wrecked body and soul. Looking into his face, I said, "Do you mean to tell me that you want to be a Christian?" for he had said he wanted to be. And then I showed him the hard side of

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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the Christian life, and said, "It means something for a boy who has been doing the things you have for seven years to live a Christian life." The harder I made it, the more he shook his head and said, "I do n't care what it costs, I have got to have it."

I am sure I was led to turn to John 3:16. I handed him the Bible and asked him to read it. He read it and looked up with such a disappointed face, and said, "I do n't see that that means anything." I said: "I did n't expect you would. Now read it again, and take out 'the world' and 'whosoever,' and put in your own full name and read it slowly." I could never forget how he read it, "God so loved Edward Nichols ——" That seemed to stagger him, and he began over again, "God so loved Edward Nichols, that He gave His only begotten Son, that if Edward Nichols should believe in Him, Edward Nichols should not perish, but have everlasting life." Never can I forget how he turned his face up and said, "Well, it sounds as though it might mean something now."

I took that wonderful verse and pointed him

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## *Everlasting Life*

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away to Calvary, and tried to show him what Christ had done for him. I then said, "We will pray, you will pray." We knelt and I waited for him to begin, but he did not begin. I opened my eyes, and he was hunting for John 3:16, and when he found it he put his finger on it and prayed. Through all the eternities I could never forget that prayer: "O God! I am not fit for You to look upon, but You say in this place where I have my finger that if I come You will take me. I do come, and O! I do want You to take me, and ——" And just then he broke off praying and burst out laughing. I looked up, and his face—it looked as though God had pushed back the gates and let all the glories of Heaven flood it. I said, "What has happened?" And he said, "I have just found out what John 3:16 means." It means if you will open the door of your heart and let this verse flood you, it will flood you with everlasting life; yea, with life everlasting.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."





“THE CONCLUSION OF THE  
WHOLE MATTER”

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of all.

"Crown Him, ye morning stars of light,  
Who fixed this earthly ball;  
Now hail the Strength of Israel's might,  
And crown Him Lord of all.

"O that with yonder sacred throng  
We at His feet may fall!  
We 'll join the everlasting song,  
And crown Him Lord of all."

## “THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER”

*Colossians 3: 11, “Christ is all and in all.”*

NEVER was sublimer Scripture written than the six simple monosyllables of this text. From Moses to John, holy men have been dipping their pens deep in the ink of inspiration to tell the world what Christ is. Moses called Him Holiness; Jeremiah, Lord; Daniel, Wisdom; Solomon, Mercy; Job, Redeemer; Matthew, Jesus; John, Light. All these told much about Him, but all alike failed to strike the word that could encompass Him. More than sixty thousand volumes have been written descriptive of the Christ. But all sixty thousand of them have n't described Him. What Christ is can't be told in volumes. There is but one thing that can fully tell what He is, and that Paul struck in this text, and that is a three-lettered monosyllable, “all.” What is Christ? Simply all. In power, He is all powerful; in wisdom, all wise; in existence, everywhere present, all present. Go into

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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any realm, terrestrial or celestial, human or divine, and behold Christ is supreme; or, as Paul puts it in his text, He is all and in all.

In æsthetics, think of everything that is beautiful, multiply that by infinity, and that is the beauty of Christ. Fair is the rising sun, fair the blue sea, but fairer than all is He. In ethics, think of everything that is good and pure, multiply that by infinity, and that is the goodness of Christ. In power—we say such a man is a power in the intellectual world, another in the social, political, but behold how each is limited to his own little world. But to Christ all power given in Heaven and in earth. In zoology, we say the horse is beautiful, the eagle swift, the tiger powerful, but more swift and beautiful and powerful than all these is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, which is the Lamb of God. With Miller, give yourself to a study of the rocks until your enthusiasm becomes white-heat over the old red sandstone, then bow ye low and hear that the only rock never split by volcano is the Rock of Ages. You will need to build on that if you are going to stand. With Gray, lose yourself in the world of flowers. Tell to all the

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## *The Conclusion of the Whole Matter*

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schools that the national flower of Athens is the violet; of India, the marigold; of Egypt, the heliotrope; of China, the chrysanthemum; then tell to all the world that the national flower of the universe is the Lily of the Valley, which is another spelling for the Christ of God. With David, go from star to star, mark the path of the Pleiades, the home of Orion, the beauty of Arcturus—then be blinded by the one Star that outshines all stars, the Star of Bethlehem, the Light of the World. Wherever you go, behold this text is emblazoned in letters of fire, so that the man who runs can read, "Christ is all in all."

Sometimes we talk about historians, and it's Herodotus, the father of history; Thucidides, the immortal historian; Prescott, the blind historian. They are historians, but He over whose divine head all history breaks into two parts, A. D. and B. C., He is history. Sometimes we talk about conquerors, and we have in mind Cæsar, who subdued a part of Gaul; Hannibal, who subdued a part of Europe; Alexander, who subdued a part of Asia; Pompey, who subdued a part of Africa. But He is the Conqueror who shall not subdue a part, but who shall

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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go from victory unto victory, until He has piled all kingdoms under His feet. Then He shall reign for ever and ever, while angels crown Him "Lord of lords and King of kings."

Men have tried to name Him; inspired men gave Him two hundred and fifty-eight names. But all two hundred and fifty-eight of them do n't fully name Him, for His is "the name that is above every name." Artists have tried to paint Him. Da Vinci painted a Christ. The world looked, the world admired, then the world dropped its head in disappointment, for he had painted an Italian Christ. Titian painted Him; his was a Venetian Christ. Dürer, his was a German Christ; Matsys, his was a Flemish Christ; Schaeffer, his was an American Christ. They all painted a Christ, they all alike failed to paint The Christ. He is not Italian, nor Venetian, nor Flemish, nor American. He's not the Christ of the Jew nor the Greek nor the bond nor the black nor the white. He is the one universal Christ of all climes and all times; He can't be painted. We might as well give it up first as last; there is no use trying to scale the skies nor delve the deeps, to find

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## *The Conclusion of the Whole Matter*

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anything<sup>m</sup> that is like this Christ nor anything that He is like, for He is the Great Unlike. It is simply Jesus, the Name high over all in Heaven or earth or sea. With Paul, we might as well fall down and cry out, "Christ, the all and in all."

Christ is all; that is, everything to three kinds of people. First, to lost people. It's a familiar story, the woman who, overtaken by the freezing storm, stripped herself of her clothes, wrapped them around her babe and—died. But she saved the child. Beautiful! But she did it for her child. Christ stripped Himself and received in His bare bosom the storm of all men's sins. And He did it for His children? Ah! He did it for those who pushed Him up upon the cross while He did it, who pressed down on His brow their crown of thorns, who cursed Him while He died.

"Well might the sun in darkness hide,  
And shut his glories in,  
When Christ, the Mighty Maker, died  
For man the creature's sin."

The prophet tells us that His visage was more marred than that of any man's. How so? Benjamin Brewster's face was scarred to the

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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bones. When a little boy, playing with his sister, her clothes caught on fire; he tried to put them out, and his hands and face were marred and scarred for life. Christ rushed through the flames for our rescue, flames that tore across His brow, flames that gnawed His flesh and drank up His blood. No wonder Isaiah says, "He is without form or comeliness, and when you see Him there is no beauty about Him, that you would desire Him." (Isa. 53:4, 5.)

John tells us His hair is white. Whitened how? Whitened alone at midnight on the frosty mountain praying for you; whitened alone fighting back the wild billows of Galilee that you might have a peaceful voyage heavenward; whitened alone dying, smitten, bleeding, abandoned. Can you grasp it? Hair white, visage marred, hands scarred, heart broken, feet spiked for lost souls.

He is also everything for lost souls, in the salvation He has provided. I mean by that simply, it is a salvation that saves the worst to the uttermost. And that's a salvation that sweeps us all in. It's a wonderful salvation that can save the blackest African, the reddest



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## *The Conclusion of the Whole Matter*

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Indian, the brownest South Sea Islander, the yellowest Japanese, and the whitest Caucasian with the blackest heart. The name Lincoln will be forever the synonym of patriotism; Cuvier, of science; Louis, of letters; Stuart, of royalty; Rothschild, of wealth; but the name Christ will for ever and ever be the synonym of salvation. That 's the meaning of His name—"Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save the people."

"I 'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

He is everything to troubled people. Two things are true of all who read these words: you have all had plenty of trouble, and you all need help. With David, many have cried, "All Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me." To many, the longest word in the language and the word that seems sharpened on the grindstone of eternal night, and the word that has been thrust deeper into the marrow of your souls than all other words, is this word trouble. To rid themselves of trouble, how men have fought and bled and died. Many, to rid

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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themselves of trouble, have fallen under a wine cup, thinking they would drown it. Lo! they drowned themselves. Others have fallen into sin, and that has been a fall to death. A few others, under the crushing load of trouble, have fallen to their knees. And for the first time, a voice has broken out of the darkness, "The mountains may depart and the hills be removed into the sea, but My loving kindness shall never depart from thee."

Dr. Dio Lewis tells us in his boyhood home there was great trouble—that his father lost his memory, that is, he forgot everything but drink, drink—that he thought of morning, noon, and night. His mother would stagger under the load for days, and then she would drag her limbs up the narrow stairs into the garret, and out of the darkness the children would hear her cry: "O Lord, how long? Help me, help me!" And then her voice would die away in the distance and there would be a long quiet in the garret. By and by they would hear her steps coming down quick and fast, and when she opened the stair door her face would look as though it had been immersed in water; it looked also as though

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## *The Conclusion of the Whole Matter*

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it had been immersed in glory, for it shone like the face of an angel. What did Mrs. Lewis find in the garret amid the cobwebs and dirt and darkness? She found Him who is everything to a troubled soul.

“Just when your way is roughest,  
Your feet all bruised and torn,  
Your back crushed with burdens  
So long and wearily borne,  
You will find that your way grows smoother,  
The mountains and hills recede,  
And there is rest and refreshment  
To meet your hour of need,”

if you fly to Him. O, fly to Him!

He is everything to dying people. There are two kinds of dying people: One, where undoubtedly Christ is present; the other, where there is at least a question whether He is present. When Hannah More was dying she said three words, “Light, light, light!” Then she went up on wings of light to the city of light. A neighbor of Hannah More’s died near the same time, and made all hideous about him with his cry, “It’s so black, so black.” How do you explain the difference? It’s only a question of pluck, backbone, you say. It is? Hannah More was

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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half scared to death at the sight of a little mouse. Her neighbor was the boasted bully and infidel of the county, bragging that there was no God, man, or devil that he was afraid of. The only rational explanation to a reasonable mind is, Christ was with Hannah More. I wonder whether He was with her infidel neighbor? What a sharp contrast between the last hour of good General Havelock, dying in India, and the great infidel of Havelock's own land, dying at the same time on a bed of down! Havelock, dying, said to his son, "Come, my boy, see how the Lord helps a child of His to die." And he was gone. The great infidel, dying, cried, "Demons haunt me, devils taunt me, don't let me go." But he plunged off somewhere. The only rational explanation to a reasonable mind is, Christ was with the good general; I wonder whether He was with the great agnostic? A young wife, dying, shouted, "I'm so happy, so happy! Jesus is so precious, so precious!" Thou, Jesus, stand by us when we come down to the last day, the last hour, the last minute, the second—gone—whither? It all depends on whether you have Him or not.

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## *The Conclusion of the Whole Matter*

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What a Christ! Who can describe Him?  
Not angel nor archangel, not the one hundred  
and forty-four thousand who, day and night,  
around His throne, chant His glory. Such a  
Christ, with feet lacerated for the world's rescue,  
heart-broken for the world's sins, hands bleeding  
for the world's uplifting. Such a Christ, with a  
heart full of hope, happiness, and Heaven.  
Such a Christ, with hands outstretched ready to  
let fall upon you pardon, peace, and purity.  
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

“I entered once a home of care,  
For age and penury were there,  
But peace and joy withal;  
I asked the lonely woman whence  
Her helpless widowhood's defense,  
She told me, 'Christ was all.'”

“I stood beside a dying bed,  
Where lay a wife with aching head,  
Waiting for Jesus' call.  
I watched her smile—'t was sweet as May—  
And as her spirit winged away,  
She whispered, 'Christ is all.'”

“I dreamed that hoary time had fled,  
And earth and sea gave up their dead,  
A fire dissolved this ball.  
I saw the Church's ransomed throng,  
I heard the burden of their song,  
'T was, 'Christ is all in all.'”

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## *The Gate to the Gospel*

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“ Then come to Christ, O! come to-day,  
The Father, Son, and Spirit say,  
The bride repeats the call.  
His blood will cleanse your guilty stain,  
His love will soothe your weary pain,  
For ‘Christ is all in all.’ ”









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